

Giving a Guest Lecture at the University of Belgrade, Department of Classics

Last year, with the help of the Santander Travel award, I attended the 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies in Belgrade. There I presented a paper based on my doctoral research which explored the literary and military innovations of a tenth-century Byzantine military manual, the *Sylloge Tacticorum*. The paper was very well received and invited a lot of discussion. Among the audience were faculty members of the University of Belgrade who had a strong interest in Byzantine Studies and in the reception of the classical tradition in Byzantium. As a result, I was invited by Assistant Professor of Classics, Dr. Dragana Dimitrijević, to contribute to a peer-reviewed volume entitled *Aspects of the Ancient Rhetorical Tradition in Byzantium* which will be published in 2018 and will contain revised papers presented in our panel during the 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies. In addition, I was also asked to visit Belgrade again and to give a guest lecture on a similar topic to the Department of Classics of the University of Belgrade. I was more than happy to accept both offers and thus this year found me visiting Belgrade one more time.

I was lucky enough to receive a Royal Holloway Travel Award which covered all my expenses and greatly facilitated my attendance in Belgrade. Giving a guest lecture was an invaluable experience for me. My lecture covered the relationship between tradition and innovation in Byzantine military manuals. The day of the presentation the venue was fully booked and among the audience I was pleased to see faculty members of the University of Belgrade whom I met last year. The lecture was followed by a very interesting and lengthy discussion with the audience and then by another, more private, yet equally stimulating dialogue with members of the Department of Classics over dinner.

After the lecture, I stayed in Belgrade for a couple of days and I am very grateful to have received such a warm hospitality from local scholars. I had the chance to visit the Institute of Byzantine Studies in Belgrade. I was shown the library and working space of the famous Byzantinist Georg Ostrogorsky and had a very interesting discussion with the members of the Institute about Byzantine Studies in Serbia over coffee. Last but not least I was shown around the city of Belgrade which is very vibrant and its Byzantine tradition and influence quite obvious in its landmarks. During the tour, I visited various museums but I particularly enjoyed an exhibition which featured Serbian Medieval and Byzantine Art.

To sum up, my second visit to Belgrade was a very productive and enjoyable experience. I had the chance to enhance the impact of my research by communicating it to a scholarly audience who shared similar interests. I also engaged with the ideas of local specialists on the reception of the classical tradition and I strengthened my ties with the scholarly community of the University of Belgrade. Finally, I had the chance to meet very interesting people and learn more about Byzantine and Classical Studies, as well as life in Serbia.